

Judging from the number of circular letters which have been sent to your editor, Abbott must be spending a good deal of the alkaloidal money in circularizing the physicians in California and telling them what a rascal "this Jones"* is and how he must endeavor to curry favor and "bolster up his official position;" that is certainly a "new one" on the editor! And such strong language! "Thoroughly absurd," "Absolutely, unutterably false," "mental vaporings," "unfair inferences of a hypercritical mind," "libelous," "defamatory," "editorial fulminations of this man," etc. He takes a whack at the editor of the *Journal A. M. A.*, merely incidentally, and then offers this description of the unspeakable Jones:

"That Jones stands ready at all times thus vindictively to second any shadow of inspiration that he can draw from this (*Journal A. M. A.*) or any other source, to make assaults upon our interests, or those of anyone else of independent thought and character, and regardless of truth and probity, is evident to all who know him."

You have all seen "this man Jones" wandering about the state for the past six years, organizing county medical societies, etc., and if, indeed, it "*is evident to all who know him*" that he is the sort of blackguard so choicely pictured by dear, good Dr. W. C. Abbott, why the quicker the society can fire him the better it would seem—for Dr. Abbott and his ilk.

Again do we call attention to the up-wave of smallpox pretty generally over the United States and notably in California.

SMALLPOX IN SCHOOLS. Doubtless the focus of many a small, localized epidemic would be found, could it always be traced, in a case of "chicken pox" in some child who has not been quarantined and has been allowed to return to school before the danger period has passed. In some instances it is quite possible to demonstrate this fact and in many more it is clearly indicated. Health boards and health officers should be on the alert and should be particularly suspicious of these light cases, or cases of apparent chicken pox in children who are attending school. It seems almost foolish to emphasize the tremendous importance of rigidly enforcing the compulsory vaccination law, and yet in some sections of the state it is being openly and notoriously violated, to our shame be it said. Just as surely as we are neglectful of this matter, we will have trouble from this disease; and to have an epidemic of smallpox is, in this day and generation, a disgrace to a community, for it points out an ignorance that should not exist. Watch the schools and inspect the school children most carefully; above all, enforce the vaccination law.

* The editor apologizes for the personal tone of this editorial, but he could not help it.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT.

Medical Society of the State of California.

By GEORGE H. EVANS, M. D., San Francisco.

I shall ask the indulgence of the Society on this occasion for departing from the usual custom pertaining to the Presidential Address, and shall present briefly a subject which, though of vital importance, in these days, when the activities of the profession are divided between Academic Medicine and Commercialism, has been relegated to comparative obscurity. The general practitioner, equally appalled by the intricacies of the former, as he is disgusted by the blatant methods of the latter, has suffered himself to lose sight of the rich heritage which it is his privilege to enjoy as a member of a profession based on the highest altruistic ideals, and has to a large extent overlooked his duties to his community in matters pertaining to Public Health, which he has sworn to safeguard.

The truth of this has forcibly obtruded itself in the light of recent events in San Francisco, in relation to the presence of Plague in that city, and the efforts being made for its eradication.

I think it would be appropriate to state at this time the means by which the public of San Francisco has been stirred in a matter of Public Health, in a way that it never was aroused before; for it illustrates the power of the profession in a community, a power which has lain dormant, and yet which when exercised can certainly make its influence felt. On December 28th, 1907, the Council of this Society met to consider the question of Plague in San Francisco, and the measures being used to control it. Plague had been present since May, and while there had been a temporary decrease in the number of human cases, owing to the fact that the medium of contact between the rat and man was inactive, the incidence of the disease in the rat was constantly increasing month by month. The peculiar danger attendant on these facts was that the proportion of the population that was not in ignorance of them was in an attitude of criminal complacency. The press, the great educational medium of a community, was silent, or abusively vociferant in its denial. A Republican government was spending over \$30,000 a month in fighting a disease that the leading Republican paper of the city said did not exist. The local Health Board, carrying the incubus of a heritage of inefficiency from its predecessor, did not enjoy the confidence of any considerable proportion of the populace. The Marine Hospital authorities were therefore thwarted in every effort looking toward permanent eradication.

These were the conditions that confronted your Council when it met to devise means to educate the public as to the grave dilemma that confronted

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the city and State, for it is the duty of the physician to educate the laity in matters pertaining to Public Health.

The Council appointed a Committee to take up this work. Arrangements were made for a meeting which was held January 18th. Six hundred invitations were sent out to those representative of mercantile and civic interests, and an attendance of about sixty, a large proportion of whom were doctors, eloquently attested the all-absorbing interest this serious dilemma presented to the citizens. The yeast that was subsequently to leaven the population was present at that meeting, however. A resolution bringing into existence a Committee, with the Mayor as chairman, was passed. The Committee was for the purpose of appointing a larger Committee of twenty-five, to aggressively take up the work of publicity and sanitation. The Mayor's Committee met; thirteen laymen and twelve physicians were appointed and organized as the Citizens' Health Committee. The record of the work done by that Committee is familiar to you all. Men, prominent in the business life of the city, have given their entire time to the work in hand. The Executive Committee, which immediately directs the campaign, is in daily session. Every branch of industry has been taught the danger to the city; every civic department; every educational institution; every organization that wields influence; every adult human being in San Francisco has been told that the city is confronted by the danger of an epidemic of Plague, and with very few exceptions all these have arisen to the occasion, and are actively engaged in the work of improving sanitation.

When we contemplate the spectacle of the business interests and the press engaged in, not only acknowledging, but disseminating the truth regarding the condition, and recall the shameful policy of denial that obtained previously, and which constituted the greatest menace to our industrial and physical security, the conviction of the power of the profession as an educational influence is brought forward with a directness which is encouraging.

What the organized profession can do with public opinion, the individual physician can and should do in his more limited sphere with those with whom he comes in contact. That this duty of the physician is not generally observed is apparent to the most casual observation; and the responsibility for this non-observance must first of all be laid at the doors of our medical schools, for hygiene is not given the prominence in the curriculum that it deserves. Until our schools more fully recognize the necessity for separate chairs for hygiene, it can not be expected that our graduates can start on their career with a true realization of the importance of this subject. The struggle for existence by the medical profession is not conducive to the development of altruistic ideas, and, unless these duties are very thoroughly instilled into the undergraduate, he will of necessity enter upon the duties of his career, indifferent to his responsibilities as a guardian of

Public Health. And so indifferent does he become that he is too often the chief offender. The popular but unreasoning fear of "chills" and "drafts" is too often responsible for the stifling atmosphere surrounding the pneumonia patient, whose chief source of oxygen is supplied him from a reservoir containing the "canned" variety—an atmosphere as pestiferous as that frequently found in the attendant's consulting room, so devoid of all suspicion of ventilation. The dread of "night air" and "fog" has caused countless sacrifices of tuberculosis victims on the altar of Moloch, while an indifferent profession has suffered the rapacious land-holder to extract his "pound of flesh" from the inhabitants of his insanitary tenements.

Is this somewhat graphic picture overdrawn? San Francisco has the highest mortality rate from tuberculosis of the ten largest cities in the United States. Tuberculosis is a disease of overcrowding in ill-ventilated places of abode. The reforms brought about in New York City through the achievements of the Tenement House Commission have done more to reduce the mortality rate from tuberculosis in that city, than any other one factor; and yet the effort to enact reform tenement house legislation in San Francisco last year was participated in by a scant half-dozen of the physicians of that city, and were it not for the earnest activity of a clergyman, supported by a few public-spirited men and women, this very important ordinance would have been hopelessly lost in committee.

Education is compulsory for all children in this State between the ages of 6 and 14. In order to properly protect the health of our children they must be housed in sanitary school buildings. Boards of Education must be taught the necessity of hygiene in the schoolroom and the school yard. Boards of Health must enforce the sanitary regulations which exist upon the statute books. An investigation of some of the schools of San Francisco reveals a condition which would appear incredible in a Christian community. Overcrowding, ill ventilation and filth in schoolrooms, insanitary condition of toilets and school yards, absence of adequate protection against fire, utter disregard of the observance of the cubic air requirements, reveal the apathy of the physician, who should lead in matters pertaining to Public Health, but who suffers his own children to be subjected to these conditions which are daily sacrificing the health of the brightest and most promising children. A holocaust in a school in an eastern city, where 170 children are sacrificed, a few hysterical newspaper articles arouse temporarily a lethargic school board to the necessity of adequate protection against fire; a severe epidemic decimating the occupants of a certain school building enforces spasmodic investigation and overhauling of the plumbing equipment; and then our complacent school board settles down to its "routine duties" until again aroused by some new catastrophe. Routine examinations of all school children and school-teachers would reveal the fact that a considerable proportion of them suffer from

physical defects which should prevent their attendance. No examinations of children or teachers are made in San Francisco, and yet, according to Williams, of New York, of 134,000 of the school children examined in that city, 90,000 were in need of medical treatment, and a considerable number of these were a menace to their companions.

What has the physician to do with all this? Is he responsible for the dereliction of duty on the part of school and health boards? I think it must be admitted that he is doubly responsible. He is responsible through his medical society, whose duty, as clearly laid down by our Constitution, is "to enlighten and direct public opinion in regard to the great problems of state medicine, so that the profession shall become more capable and honorable within itself, and more useful to the public, in the prevention and cure of disease, and in prolonging and adding comfort to life." He is responsible in his individual capacity because he has failed to instruct the parents in the necessity of properly attending to the health of their children.

It has been very encouraging during the past year to observe the activity of the Pure Food Commission of this Society, and I shall not attempt to anticipate the Report of this Commission. The work of such a body, however, can not be carried to a successful termination without the active support of each individual physician. The evils which everywhere exist do not present the interest of the medical man in this important subject in a very creditable light. Recent revelations in Butchertown in San Francisco, show that for forty years a large portion of the meat supply of that city has been prepared in an environment of disease-breeding filth, which cause the Chicago abattoirs described by Upton Sinclair, to stand forth as ideal sanitary institutions in comparison. The vegetables which supply our tables are carried into the city in the same wagons which cart the fertilizing manure back to the vegetable gardens, despite the fact of the existence of an ordinance which strictly forbids such an outrage. For several years the Milk Commission of the San Francisco County Medical Society has vainly endeavored to create in that city a demand for clean milk. Children are alcoholized and dosed with nostrums for digestive maladies, the result of improper feeding, by a profession that largely suffers itself to be taught modern therapeutics by the patent medicine and food manufacturer. Philanthropists cry out for funds for the support of hospitals for children poisoned by dirty milk from tuberculous herds, while we suffer these bacterial emulsions to be daily fed to our patients, and placed upon our own tables.

Is it not time that the family physician should be brought to a realizing sense of his obligation to the public, and the awful results of his indifference? Are we, the profession of today, to rest unmindful of the duties devolving upon us, or shall we, by a conscientious performance of our daily duty, take our proper place in the community as guardians of Public Health?

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

By C. G. KENYON, M. D., Chairman.

Your Council herewith presents the report of the work which has passed through its hands since the last meeting of the Society. Eleven meetings have been held and the attendance has been most gratifying. The unusual conditions following the disaster of 1906 and the resulting sudden adjournment of the Society, forced upon the Council rather peculiar duties. Del Monte was selected by the Council as the place for the last meeting, and the various matters which had come before it up to that time were ratified last April by the House of Delegates.

In order that the work might be the better carried on, the Council authorized the President to increase the Pure Food Commission to five members, and took similar action in regard to the Committee on Arrangements. At the meeting in October the resignation of Dr. F. C. E. Mattison from the Council was accepted, and as no recommendation had been received from the Los Angeles County Association, for filling the vacancy, the Council elected Dr. F. M. Pottenger to fill said vacancy until the time of this meeting.

On December 28th, at the request of the President, a meeting of the Council was held to consider the presence of plague in California and discuss the action of the Council in that connection. It was regularly moved and carried that the President of the State Society, Dr. George H. Evans, be authorized to appoint four other members to act with him as a committee of five to wait upon the business and commercial organizations of San Francisco, and in the name of the Medical Society of the State of California, urge upon them the necessity for a public awakening to the immediate danger of the situation. The President appointed to act with him as such committee, Drs. Sherman, Williamson, Parkinson and Galloway. You are all doubtless aware that the successful work of that committee has brought about a wonderful awakening in San Francisco and a most energetic sanitary campaign.

One of the gravest tasks confronting the Council was the successful carrying through of the work of the Society while at the same time financing its obligations. The statements of financial condition, and from the auditor who experted the accounts, will show you what has been done. You will note that during the year 1907 \$2,616.85 was paid out for obligations of previous years (some of this debt going back as far as 1905), that our liabilities were reduced during the same period by the sum of \$997.16, to which amount must be added \$450.00 paid for paper to be used in 1908, and \$200.00 cash fund, making a total cash gain for the year \$1,647.16.

The statement of cash April 1st, 1908, shows you that it would be possible for the Society to liquidate all its indebtedness at once, if such action were required or necessary. But the necessity for carefully husbanding our resources during 1907 has made it impossible to prosecute the work of organization as it should have been done. With the coming of